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PROVISIONAL AGENDA FOR THE WORLD CONFERENCE AND DOCUMENTATION, INCLUDING THE QUESTION OF THE FINAL OUTCOME

Letter dated 11 August 1992 from the Director of International Protection of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees addressed to the Secretary-General of the World Conference on Human Rights

I have the honour to refer to our recent conversation during the course of which we discussed the question of statelessness.

The Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme has expressed its concern over problems of statelessness several times in recent years. In its conclusion No. 50 (XXXIX) (1988), paragraph (1), the Executive Committee noted the close connection between the problems of refugees and of stateless persons and invited States actively to explore and promote measures favourable to stateless persons, including accession to the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness, as well as the adoption of legislation to protect the basic rights of stateless persons and to eliminate sources of statelessness. At its most recent session, in 1991, the Executive Committee reaffirmed Conclusion No. 50 (1)(XXXIX) and reiterated its call to States actively to explore and promote measures favourable to stateless persons, including accession to the international instruments pertaining to stateless persons, and in this connection believed it would be useful for United Nations human rights bodies to address statelessness issues, including the problem of arbitrary deprivation of nationality and the content of the right to a nationality.

Reflecting this concern on the part of the Executive Committee, the Office has raised the subject of statelessness as an important human rights issue which merits a place on the agenda of the 1993 World Conference on Human Rights. In recommendations to and a statement before the Preparatory Committee for the World Conference on Human Rights at its first session and in the High Commissioner's statement to the Commission on Human Rights at its forty-eighth session, the Office specifically noted that the right to a nationality deserves more attention from the international community. In this regard the Office pointed out that the inability of a refugee to avail him- or herself of the protection of a nationality can be seen as an issue of statelessness, whether de facto or de jure. States have the responsibility to reduce statelessness and to provide for the possibility of enjoying the normal rights of nationality.

(Signed) Leonardo FRANCO